

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20307-5001

HR-2 Nursing Policy

23 July 2005

Scheduling

1. PURPOSE: To provide guidance for the development and projection of nursing personnel work schedules to ensure safe and effective staffing across the inpatient nursing units.

2. SCOPE: This regulation is applicable to all WRAMC nursing personnel working on inpatient units and the Emergency Room.

3. REFERENCES:

- a. Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals (CAMH), Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) (2005).
- b. AR 40-66, Medical Record Administration and Healthcare Documentation, 20 July 2004.
- c. AR 40-407, Nursing Records and Reports, 15 August 1991.
- d. AR 600-8-10, Leaves and Passes, 31 July 2003.
- e. WRAMC Supervisor's Resource Handbook, "Together in Caring," January 2000.
- f. AR 690-990-2 BK 610, Subchapter S1. "Weekly and Daily Scheduling of Work." (<http://www.usapa.army.mil/gils/epubs7html>), 20 May 1989.
- g. Atlas Business Solutions, Inc. Visual Staff Scheduler® Pro, Version 5.0 Users Guide, 2000.

4. EXPLANATION OF TERMS:

- a. Visual Staff Scheduler Pro® (VSS Pro®): A commercial scheduling software package used within the Department of Nursing to enter personnel time schedules, set safe staffing threshold levels by work area, assess staffing shortfalls, and provide staffing over-watch from any supervisory level.

This publication supersedes NPOL HR-2 dated 25 August 2002.

b. People Sheet: A standardized work sheet generated for each inpatient unit 12 hours to three days prior to the start of the duty day. The People Sheet displays staff by name, level of licensure, and shift. A working document, it captures inpatient unit census and nursing care hours at the change of shift as well as projected staffing needs over the next two shifts based on current staff and projected staffing needs for patient care requirements. The people sheet serves as a tool for the evening/night supervisor to monitor staffing and make adjustments to fluctuations within work centers.

c. Hours of Duty: VSS Pro® is configured with a number of different shift codes (Appendix A). Shift codes are used only for staff available for duty in a clinical area. Non-clinical duty codes will be used for all other work, military training, and education outside the work center.

d. Position Description: VSS Pro® is configured to identify staff by specified codes (Appendix B) indicating their role on the nursing unit by level of licensure and status (civilian, contract or military). *It is imperative for the correct operation of the program to use these exact codes.*

e. Core Staffing Levels: Minimum-staffing requirements developed by front-line supervisors based on current mission, historical workload data, current workload, and ASAM staffing requirements. These requirements are set in the VSS Pro® template to serve as the denominator in over-watch calculations by the scheduling software.

f. Coverage-watch Calculation: Calculations made by VSS Pro® to determine whether the current schedule meets staffing requirements. The front line manager programs staff count by level of nursing provider. The coverage-watch section shows categories of employee by shift. No number in a corresponding shift box indicates staffing is at the predetermined core staffing level. Black positive numbers represent the number of staff available above staffing requirements, and red negative numbers indicate the number of additional staff needed to meet core staff level.

g. Non-clinical Duty Codes: A list of pre-approved codes used to define an employee's time off the nursing unit, generally considered to be in eight hour increments to include "day-off". A defined shift is not entered for this time period. If a shift code is entered, that individual will appear in the over watch area on the People Sheet. Non-clinical duty codes (Appendix C) are printed in the system schedule and posted time schedules.

5. RESPONSIBILITY:

a. Deputy Commander for Nursing: Responsible for safe, effective, and equitable staffing and utilization of nursing personnel.

b. Clinical Section Chief/NCOIC:

- 1) Responsible for prudent utilization of resources to ensure safe, effective, and equitable scheduling of all personnel within the section.
- 2) Reviews time schedules in VSS Pro® to determine safe care requirements, judicious use of contract man-hours, and corrects discrepancies with head nurses.
- 3) Visits nursing units daily, using People Sheets to verify staff present for duty, correct discrepancies, annotate sick leave/quarters, and verify contract nursing fills and cancellations.
- 4) Makes necessary staffing adjustments within the section to meet safe staffing requirements.
- 5) Reviews projected staffing to ensure adequate coverage of patient care needs. Attends afternoon report each duty day and presents the evening/night supervisor with the most up-to-date People Sheets for the next two shifts.

c. Weekend and Holiday/Evening/Night Supervisor:

- 1) Makes rounds on individual nursing units, verifying that staff are present for duty and adequate for current care requirements, annotating any changes on the People Sheets.
- 2) Makes necessary adjustments in staffing based on workload and available staff.
- 3) Notifies Head Nurse/Wardmaster if staffing needs cannot be met.
- 4) Returns People Sheets to section chief during morning report with annotated changes.

d. Head Nurse/Wardmaster:

- 1) Responsible for establishing core staffing requirements, staffing patterns, and shift rotational guidelines for professional and paraprofessional nursing staff.
- 2) Responsible for the timely preparation and posting of the time schedule, to provide staffing coverage to meet mission requirements. The HN/WM may delegate the authority to perform schedule preparation to a qualified staff member.
- 3) Reviews schedule, workload, People Sheet, and current skill mix of staff, making schedule adjustments as necessary.

4) Approves and makes changes to posted time schedule, making necessary adjustments in VSS Pro® to update People Sheet used by section/evening/night supervisors.

6. POLICY:

a. Time schedules will be generated using the VSS Pro® scheduling software package available to all Head Nurses and Wardmasters.

b. Finalized schedules will be prepared and posted four weeks prior to the projected workweek and will be available for Section Chief review online through the W: drive. Working schedules should be projected out at least six weeks to anticipate contract staff requests.

c. Shift codes for hours of duty will be entered only according to those codes defined within VSS Pro® and delineated in Appendix A.

d. AR 600-8-10, Leaves and Passes, and local company policy will be followed for military absences related to scheduling. Non-Duty codes defined within in VSS Pro® are the only authorized codes. Additional information related to the code can be entered in the notes section.

e. Each nursing unit will retain reconciled schedules for a minimum period of one year.

7. GUIDELINES:

a. General

1) The basic guidelines for scheduling includes a thirty (30) minute unpaid break for meals and 2 fifteen minute paid breaks. The administrative workweek begins at 0001 hours on Sunday and ends at 2400 hours on the following Saturday. Individuals can be assigned all shifts, but may request a particular shift preference of permanent evenings or permanent nights with rotation to other shifts when necessary. It may be necessary for the provision of patient care requirements to rotate personnel through three shifts, however, the scheduling of three different shifts in one week is highly discouraged. Civil Service employees and contract staff are expected to give a minimum of two hours notice when ill or not available to report as scheduled. This will allow time to make any necessary schedule adjustments. All military, civilian, and contract registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), certified nursing assistants (CNAs), and medical records technicians (MRTs) assigned to inpatient units are considered Essential Personnel.

2) Civilian Staff Scheduling. Permanent day duty is not usually possible on inpatient nursing units. Two shift rotations or predominately evenings and/or predominately nights are potential options. Availability, coverage, and staffing needs will determine choices from which the employee may select. Employees will be oriented and evaluated before being considered for a permanent or two-shift rotation work pattern. Civilian differential pay is earned for duty between 1800 hours and 0600 hours. Working on a legal holiday entitles a civilian employee to holiday pay. When a regularly scheduled day off falls on a holiday, the employee remains entitled to his/her usual two days off. In essence, the civilian employee either works the holiday and is financially compensated by holiday pay, or receives the holiday off. Compensatory time or overtime pay is granted in 15-minute increments for occasional overtime required by the supervisor and must be approved in advance. Absence of civilian employees must be properly accounted for on the employee's time and attendance record.

2) Military Scheduling. The military work week is dependent upon patient care needs and personnel availability. When an individual is scheduled for duty on a holiday, he/she is entitled to a compensatory day off which should be taken within 30 days before or after the holiday.

3) Contract Nurse Scheduling. Contract nurse employees are scheduled on a monthly basis through coordination with agency representatives and unit level managers. Requirements are usually e-mailed to the agency no later than (NLT) the 10th of the month. Agency fills are then provided to the unit level managers NLT the 20th of the month. Scheduling is based on availability, coverage and staffing needs. Contract employees will orient to and work all three shifts and may be asked to float to other appropriate patient care areas (within the scope of the specific contract). Managers may cancel contract employees based on decreased staffing requirements. A two-hour notice is required, or a minimum of two hours must be paid to the agency. Cancellations should be made in lieu of granting compensatory time or on-call status to military or civilian (GS) personnel. Overtime is not permitted unless specified in the contract, and only when approved by the supervisor. Contract nurse employees will work no more than 12 hours in a 24-hour period.

b. VSS Pro® Time Scheduling Guidelines

1) VSS Pro® is configured on every head nurse, Wardmaster, and section chief's office personal computer. The Nursing Informatics Officer is the proponent for all VSS Pro® installation and troubleshooting issues. The Department of Information Management requires the placement of a help desk ticket call at 202-356-0231. Callers should keep the ticket # provided close at hand until the VSS Pro® software has been installed on the requested PC. Due to license restrictions, installations are limited to 2 computers on each nursing unit.

2) Head Nurses and Wardmasters are responsible for correctly entering employee's name and authorized duty description according to parameters defined in VSS Pro®. (See Atlas Business Solutions, Inc. Visual Staff Scheduler ® Pro, Version 5.0 Users Guide, 2000.) Incorrectly entering this information could keep staff from appearing on the People Sheets for accountability and staffing purposes.

3) Head nurse and Wardmaster will enter schedules directly into the VSS Pro® program. All non-military WRAMC employees must work a 40-hour workweek or 80 hours within a pay period unless covered by a medical profile.

4) The original time schedule will be posted on the nursing unit. Day to day schedule changes will be made on the posted copy of the time schedule and updated by 2230 in VSS Pro® to assure accurate people sheets for the subsequent duty days.

5) Daily people sheets will be posted and updated on the W: drive with viewing access for supervisors 48-72 hours from the beginning of the workday.

6) The final version of the People Sheet from each unit will be given to the Evening/Night Supervisor between 1400 and 1500 hours, a day in advance or the last business day of the week before a weekend or holiday. Original copies of the People Sheets are currently maintained in the Nursing Human Resources Office.

7) The VSS Pro® software is not available for use between 2300 and 2400 hours daily. All users of VSS Pro® will exit and close the program during this time to allow the program to generate the People Sheets. The one-hour provides the E/N NCO time to complete the required daily database refresh required to print the most accurate People Sheets possible reflecting all recent changes.

8) The People Sheets should be refreshed and updated to reflect not less than the next 2-weeks during standard non-holiday periods, and 3-weeks out over holidays. The people sheets should always be updated through Tuesday of each week. This will ensure schedules are covered throughout long weekends.

9) People Sheet issues and troubleshooting should be addressed directly to the Nursing Informatics Officer.

//original signed//
JOAN P. EITZEN
COL, AN
Deputy Commander for Nursing

APPENDIX A

Hours of Duty Defined at WRAMC and Available in VSS Pro®

VSS Pro® Shift Code	Start Time	End Time	Shift Length
DO	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	0
1	6:45 AM	3:15 PM	8
2	2:45 PM	11:15 PM	8
3	10:45 PM	7:15 AM	8
4	7:45 PM	4:15 AM	8
4A	10:45 AM	7:15 PM	8
4P	10:00 AM	6:30 PM	8
5	7:00 PM	11:00 PM	4
5A	7:00 AM	11:00 AM	4
5P	11:00 AM	11:30 PM	12
6	6:45 AM	7:15 PM	12
6P	12:00 PM	8:30 PM	8
7	6:45 PM	7:15 AM	12
8	7:30 AM	4:00 PM	8
8A	12:45 PM	9:15 PM	8
9P	7:00 AM	5:30 PM	10
9Q	6:00 AM	4:30 PM	10
10	5:00 AM	1:30 PM	8
10A	8:45 AM	7:15 PM	10
10B	10:45 AM	9:15 PM	10
10C	12:45 PM	11:15 PM	10
10D	1:45 PM	12:15 AM	10
10E	8:45 PM	7:15 AM	10
10F	10:00 AM	8:30 PM	10
10G	8:00 AM	6:30 PM	10
10P	9:00 AM	7:30 PM	10
11A	10:45 AM	11:15 PM	12
12	1:00 PM	9:30 PM	8
12A	11:45 AM	12:15 AM	12
13	9:45 AM	6:15 PM	8
14	8:00 AM	4:30 PM	8
16	12:45 AM	9:15 AM	8
17	6:45 AM	5:15 PM	10
18	8:30 AM	5:00 PM	8
20	9:00 AM	5:30 PM	8
21	3:00 AM	11:30 AM	8
22	6:45 AM	11:15 PM	16
23	2:45 PM	7:15 AM	16
24	3:00 AM	3:30 PM	12
25	5:00 AM	5:30 PM	12

APPENDIX B

Position Descriptions in Visual Staff Scheduler ® Pro

Position Description	Visual Staff Scheduler ® Pro Abbreviation
Head Nurse	RN HN
Ward Master	LPN WM
Army Nurse Corps Officer	RN
GS Registered Nurse	RN GS
91W M6	LPN
GS Practical Nurse	LPN GS
91W	NA
GS Nursing Assistant	NA GS
Contract Registered Nurse	RN CN
Contract Practical Nurse	LPN CN
Contract Nursing Assistant	NA CN
Telemetry Technicians	MRT
Medical Records Technologist	MRT

APPENDIX C
Visual Staff Scheduler ® Pro Authorized Non-Duty Codes

Explanation	Abbreviation
Absence Without Pay	AWOP
Administrative Time	ADMT
Annual Leave	LV
Appointment	APPT
Absent Without Leave	AWOL
Birth Month Annual Review	BMAR
Borrowed Time External	BTE
Cancel By Agency	CBA
Cancel By Self	CBS
Cancel By WRAMC	CBW
Charge Nurse	CHN
Charge of Quarters - Med	CQ-M
Compensatory Time Earned	CE
Compensatory Time Taken	CT
Convalescent Leave	CLV
Day Off	DO
Education & Training	TNG
Extra Duty - Med	ED-M
Flag Detail	FD
Holiday Time	HT
In/Out Processing	PROC
Leave Without Pay	LWOP
Loan Time External	LTE
Loan Time Internal	LTI
Maternity Leave	ML
Military Organization Related Activity	MORA
Military Training	MTNG
No Show	NS
On Call	C
Orientation	(O)
Other - Military/Civilian	OTH
Overtime - Civilian	OT
Pass	PASS
Physical Training	PT
PROFIS Training	PROF
Requested Day Off	R
Reservist	RES
Staff Duty NCO - M	NC-M
Sick - Military/Civilian	SK
Sleep Time	SP
Supervisor	SUPE
Temporary Duty (TDY)	TDY
Training Holiday	TH
Transfer In	TI
Transfer Out	TO